Tsunami disaster isn’t ‘natural’
Imperialism causes death and destruction

by MIM

The more than 150,000 deaths from the earthquake and tsunami in South Asia are an almost unfathomable disaster, especially for those in the First World who have never seen destruction of this scale. Even the U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said that the destruction he saw in South Asia last week was far worse than what he had seen at war. Still many people in Amerika offered financial donations for relief to the devastated region. MIM applauds these acts of selflessness by Amerikans not generally concerned with people outside of U.S. borders. It is this kind of internationalist sentiment that we work to foster.

But at the same time we have to ask why people don’t similarly offer aid to people fighting the repression of a military dictatorship, or deadly attacks from imperialist armies, or economic devastation from IMF and World Bank austerity measures. All of these are disasters for Third World people, literally killing them. The major difference is the apparent non-political nature of the tsunami deaths, and of course the American government’s support for aid to the victims. But the deaths from this tsunami were not from a “natural” disaster, any more than the American military’s “accidental” bombing of a civilian house in Iraq today (January 8) was a “natural” disaster.

As MIM wrote in our theory journal on Revolutionary Environmentalism: “Another phenomenon which is often not recognized as preventable is ‘natural’ disasters, such as floods, volcano eruptions, and earthquakes. Sure, these are ‘natural,’ but why are they disasters? The answer in many cases is that the majority of the world does not have the resources to deal effectively with nature’s surprises. Many communities cannot be warned to evacuate when necessary, because they do not have television sets or radios. Once such communities are destroyed by natural events, the neocolonies’ poverty prevents the reconstruction of the infrastructure - if there was an infrastructure to speak of in the first place.”(4)

In South Asia many of the tsunami deaths could have been prevented with an early warning system similar to the one set up in Hawaii to warn the wealthy Pacific Ocean areas of potential tsunamis. A proposal to set up such a warning system was dismissed for lack of funding in the South Asian region.

A system that forces hundreds of thousands of people to live illegally in shacks on the beach because they can not afford housing even though they work long hours every day caused even more deaths. The many fisherpeople and their families killed by the tsunami lived in these conditions while the wealthy in their countries enjoyed fresh fish and comfortable living on higher ground. In South Asia, Amerikan economic and military support that props up corrupt governments which keep the wealth for themselves and their Amerikan partners. Indonesia is a prime example of this. The brutal military dictatorship in that country has enjoyed imperialist aid and support, particularly from the United States which in turn looks to Indonesia for cheap labor for its imperialist corporations. Indonesia massacred more than a third of the East Timorese population in its years long attempt to put down East Timor’s independence struggle. In Aceh province, one of the

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On the web: www.etext.org/Politics/MIM
Letters

Letter from Maoist student in China

Comrades of MIM:

Nice to meet you!

I am a real Maoist from X university, Y city, People's Republic of China. I am not a member of the CPC, because I don't think it is a real communist party. I do not like today's China of capital.

Your words look like a light in the night for me, you see, I have no chance to know some real history of China.

I will keep in touch with your organization. I wanna know what can I do for works of MIM.

Sorry for my poor English.

Long Live MIM! Long Live the Revolution! Long Live the Peoples' Wars of the Third World!

--A Chinese Maoist

Alleged Halliburton employee writes to MIM: “Freedom” misused again

mim3@mim.org comments:

We received a letter from someone alleging to work for Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR), a subsidiary of the contractor company called Halliburton, of Vice-President Dick Cheney fame.

He appeared to be responding to our article on Thomas Hamill in which we said: “Last September the 43-year-old volunteer firefighter signed on to drive a fuel truck for a year in Iraq for up to $120,000, tax free,” according to CNN. Hamill was working for a sub-contractor for Halliburton.

“This fact is that Thomas Hamill is a microcosm of Amerika. Whether any philosophists know it or not, American jobs and salaries depend on the global web of exploitation created by the monster of U.S. imperialism concretely manifested in multinational corporations like Halliburton. Americans are directly enemies of the Iraqi people unless they prove otherwise in action. As a truck-driver in Iraq, Hamill was making more (than ten times more) than the minimum wage — a real communist party.

“Others working and missing in Iraq include seven employees of American contractor Kellogg, Brown & Root. The plan of the Bush administration had been to have thousands of U.S. employees in Iraq earning out billions of dollars worth of contracts.

“Communists! It’s time to break with your phony communist organizations and work with the only organization with a line practically opposing all aspects of the war on Iraq. Anybody oozing any sympathy for the Amerikan contractors is simply oozing sympathy for imperialism. Rather than echoing the Bush administration on the ‘barbarians’ in Iraq, communists should take sides with the Iraqi people.”(1)

Alleged KBR employee:

That is as weak a statement as I have ever heard. It must be nice to have the freedom of speech to put people down that are defending our Country. I myself am a contractor for Halliburton. And the same has happened to be on the same route as Thomas Hamill that very day. It takes a pretty weak minded person to think that contractors are over in Iraq for any other reason except to help the Iraqi people. We are here to support the military, in order to restore freedom for the Iraqis. We put our asses on the line, day in and day out. Until you have the same fortitude to do the same, maybe you ought to keep your pie hole shut!!

mim3@mim.org replies:

So, how much did you make in Iraq compared with what it would be at home USA?

If you want to help Iraq, why not send some money and let Iraqis drive their own trucks and build their own infrastructure?

If you are for “free speech” then why are you helping a plan that has resulted in imprisoning newspapers and political demonstrators seeking to open them?

Two months after ‘liberating’ Iraq, the Anglo-US authorities have decided to control the new, free press.

www.independent.co.uk

http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/agitation/iraq/bushhussein.html

Halliburton employee responds:

For the money that I made over here versus the money that I made at home, the only difference is that it is tax free. I’m not here solely for the money. I am here to support the military, as well as my country. These Iraqi people need a lot more than money. They need some deep support. The military is trying to put them in a position to stand up on there own. You need to understand that these people have been deeply suppressed for thousands of years. George Bush didn’t send these TROOPS in here just for war. This is for other countries. But as Americans, and the rest of the Coalition Forces, that is the price that we are willing to pay.

Don’t knock the Contractor for trying to help this cause. Sure alot of us better our financial position in life by working over here. The world will be a better place through finding the better source of a people.

mim3@mim.org replies for MIM:

If you are concerned about freedom, get the Americans at KBR to go back home and work on politics there, because the United States leads the way in imprisoning people in America. Get the Brits to go back to England, because the imprisonment rate is the highest in Europe there.

http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/faq/freecoun.html

If you think someone in Iraq would have been better than Hussein, learn how the United States assisted him to power including how Rumsfeld brought him biological weapons.

http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/agitation/iraq/bushhussein.html

To have the right to boast about freedom, you have to earn it. When the United States shows the world how to do with the least imprisonment, then it

MIM Notes

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MIM Notes is the bi-weekly newsletter of the Maoist Internationalist Movement. MIM Notes is the official Party voice; more complete statements are published in our journal, MIM Theory. Material in MIM Notes is the Party’s position unless noted. MIM Notes accepts submissions and critiques from anyone. The editors reserve the right to edit submissions unless permission is specifically denied by the author; submissions are published anonymously unless authors insist on identification (prisoners are never identified by name). MIM is an underground party that does not publish the names of its comrades in order to avoid the state surveillance and repression that have historically been directed at communist parties and anti-imperialist movements. MIM, MIM comrades, are members of the Party. The Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist League (RAIL) is an anti-imperialist mass organization led by MIM (RCs are RAIL Comrades). MIM’s ten-point program is available to anyone who sends in a SASE.

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What is MIM?

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) is the collection of existing or emerging Maoist internationalist parties in the English-speaking imperialist countries and their English-speaking internal semi-colonies, as well as the existing or emerging Maoist Internationalist parties in Belgium, France and Quebec and the existing or emerging Spanish-speaking Maoist Internationalist parties of Aztlán, Puerto Rico and other territories of the U.S. Empire. MIM Notes is the newspaper of MIM. Notas Rojas is the newspaper of the Spanish-speaking parties or emerging parties of MIM. MIM upholds the revolutionary communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and is an internationalist organization that works from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat. MIM struggles to end the oppression of all groups over other groups: classes, genders, nations. MIM knows this is only possibly by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle. Revolution is a reality for North America as the military becomes over-extended in the government’s attempts to maintain world hegemony. MIM differs from other communist parties on three main questions: (1) MIM holds that after the proletariat seizes power in socialist revolution, the proletariat must establish the leadership of the new bourgeoisie within the communist party itself. In the case of the USSR, the bourgeoisie seized power after the death of Stalin in 1953; in China, it was after Mao’s death and the overthrow of the “Gang of Four” in 1976. (2) MIM upholds the Chinese Cultural Revolution as the farthest advance of communism in human history. (3) As Marx, Engels and Lenin formulated and MIM has reiterated through material analysis, imperialism exacts super-profits from the Third World and in part uses this wealth to buy off whole populations of oppressor nation–socalled workers. These so-called workers bought off by imperialism form a new petty-bourgeoisie called the labor aristocracy. These classes are not the principal vehicles to advance Marxism within those countries because their standards of living depend on imperialism. At this time, imperialist super-profits create this situation in the Canada, Quebec, the United States, England, France, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Italy, Switzerland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Israel, Sweden and Denmark. MIM accepts people as members who agree on these basic principles and accept democratic centralism, the system of majority rule, on other questions of party line.

“The theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is universally applicable. We should study it not as dogma, but as a guide to action. Studying it is not merely a matter of learning terms and phrases, but of learning Marxism-Leninism as the science of revolution.”

U.S. military relief operations in Asia far worse than the tsunami

by the ILPS-Philippines Chapter  
January 11, 2005

The International League of People’s Struggle (ILPS) Philippines Chapter condemns the U.S. for making political capital out of the catastrophic tsunami which engulfed a wide swath of Asia, including some parts of Africa, and killed 160,000 people. The ILPS Philippines Chapter denounces the crass opportunism expressed by U.S. State Secretary Colin Powell when he said that the U.S. military relief and aid that it is giving Aceh “should change the battered image of the United States around the globe after the its arrogant disregard of international public opinion against the invasion of Iraq. He likewise boasted that this aid is a manifestation of U.S. “generosity” and “American values in action.”

Instead of sending skilled civilians, the United States seized the opportunity to send an array of U.S. warships, planes, helicopters, and more than 13,000 U.S. military personnel purportedly to help Indonesia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka, countries most affected by the December 26 disaster. The USS Abraham Lincoln, an aircraft carrier with 6,000 sailors on board, is currently stationed about 28 kms or 15 nautical miles off Aceh while a fleet of Sea Hawk helicopters from same carrier have been flying food, water, and medical supplies in said region where there is an armed rebellion against the Indonesian government. One thousand and five hundred U.S. troops, meanwhile, are deployed in Sri Lanka where there is also an armed rebellion waged by the Tamil Tigers which is fighting for self-determination. U.S. forces are also using Thailand’s Vietnam era base of Utapao as an air/hub for the so-called “humanitarian” mission, strengthening potential U.S. military logistical support through Southeast Asia. Conducting the largest operation in Asia since the Vietnam War, the U.S. military said that its forces could remain in the region for up to six months. Six months can always be extended of course until it becomes permanent.

It is well known that strengthening U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia is a major element in the neocolonialists’ imperialist project of Pax Americana in the 21st century that presupposes U.S. imperialism’s unchallenged global hegemony. Given U.S. imperialism’s proven record of economic plunder and destructive wars, the U.S. military deployment augurs a calamity far worse than the tsunami that devastated these Asian countries.


**Tsunami disaster isn’t ‘natural’**

**Imperialism causes death and destruction**

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hardest hit areas, the notoriously brutal Indonesian army continued its persecution of rebels even in the wake of the death of so many people in the region. These armed patrols are deadly to the population both directly, and as a potential problem for aid delivery.

The mainstream media likes to talk about the “indiscriminate” destruction of the tsunami as if it means something. The fact is that the vast majority of those who died lived their lives in poverty. The few thousand deaths of resort visitors were a tiny portion of the total, and were at least matched by the deaths of resort workers. While CNN highlights the affect of the tsunami on tourism, tourists who lay on the beaches in Phuket, the locals who live in poverty are brushed over with sweeping views of devastated coastline and images of aid delivery.

According to the World Bank, more than 95% of all deaths caused by disasters occur in developing (Third World) countries; and losses due to natural disasters are 20 times greater (as a percentage of GDP) in developing countries than in imperialist countries. But redevelopment aid will focus on the recognized businesses, particularly tourism and bigger businesses. Small businesses and illegal squatters can expect to be pushed off of land and out of work where wealthier people can step in to benefit.

Professor Sumner La Croix, senior fellow in economics at the Hawaii-based East-West Center, an imperialist economic mouthpiece, provides a good example of what we can expect from “rebuilding.” The tsunami damage is confined to mostly rural areas and so, La Croix says: “Most rebuilding will replicate what was previously in place: vacationers want hotels by the beach; stores will be located near the beach to provide goods and services; and roads go through these towns.” There is no mention of

**Notes:**

1. This is what happened to Indymedia in October 2004.  
2. This was the fate of Sherman Austin who is now on probation after spending over a year in federal prison for something someone else posted on the webspace he hosted. See www.freesherman.org
Imperialist population: 1 billion

by mim3@mim.org and HC123
January 13, 2005

A rough calculation of the population in the imperialist world in 2004 is 1025 million. That compares with a total world population of 6450 million. The imperialist population is also smaller than the populations of either China or India. The 1025 million of imperialism is only one-tenth of the 1 billion versus 5.5 billion. Such a calculation is not a very good approximation of the global picture.

The Third World languishes under the weight of a heavy load of imperialist parasites, almost 30% of which come from the United States. It will be interesting to watch the demographics in coming years. Most European countries, including the non-imperialist ones, will decline in population in the coming decades. So will Japan. The United States, however, will continue to grow, largely from immigration, to surpass 400 million by 2050. Excluding Russia and using the UN’s projections for 2050, there will be a total of 978.3 million in the aforementioned countries. That represents a decline in the relative imperialist population, from 13.7% of the world today to 11.0% forty-five years hence. On the other hand, the United States will be a larger fraction of the imperialist world excluding Russia, going from 33.9% in 2004 to 41.8% of the imperialist population in 2050.

This is also important for understanding the future of capitalism. The Third World is an exploited world. To say that the Third World has 10% exploiters is to equate their economic condition with that of the imperialists—a mistake made by the vast majority of organizations calling themselves “Marxist” in the imperialist countries. Some are still stuck in 1848 and others of these organizations are conscious exploiter representatives.

Notes:

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deserves some attention. Failing that, don’t be surprised that people question your real motivations.

Postscript: This again is an example why it’s important to fight phony Marxism. The imperialists are happy to use “workers” such as this one and Thomas Hamill in a propaganda game to influence public opinion in the United States. In the furor over the hostage-taking of a Persian oil executive, the US Marines were described as “local supporters of the Iranian regime” and the US president was said to want to “end the Lashkar-e-Toiba.” These assertions are simply out of the blue.

Notes:
Notes on the term “Maoism”

by mim3@mim.org

Our name established in 1984 is the “Maoist Internationalist Movement,” but the first word has a long history, behind it, so long, that the choice of one word concentrates a huge political struggle, the most important one of our times in the international communist movement. [This work is incomplete, so you can help out if you want by sending in your analysis and historical references.]

In August 1948, while preparing his speech for the opening ceremony of North China University, Comrade Wu Yuzhang decided to use “Maoism” [Mao2 Ze2dong1 zhu3yi4] instead of “Mao Zedong Thought” [Mao2 Ze2dong1 si4 lian2xiang3] and to proclaim that “studying Maoism is of primary importance.” He sent Comrade Mao Zedong a telegram to ask for his advice. In reply, Comrade Mao Zedong wrote: “I agree with this idea, but it is quite inappropriate. There is no such thing as Maoism. Don’t say ‘studying Maoism is of primary importance.’ You must rather urge the students to study the theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin as well as their historical experiences of the Chinese revolution. Here ‘the experience of the Chinese revolution’ includes the various little booklets written by Chinese communists (Mao Zedong among them) and the documents of all the lines and policies established by the Party Central Committee.”

In 1955, at a nationwide conference of intellectuals, some comrades again suggested changing “Mao Zedong Thought” to “Maoism.” Comrade Mao Zedong did not approve of this suggestion. He said: “Maoism—Leninism is the trunk of the tree; I am just a twig.” (http://www.huaxia.com/20031222/00159588.html)

This sort of statement and the continued use of the phrase “Marxism-Leninism” for a historical period has caused much confusion in our own times in the international communist movement’s split between revisionism and scientific communism comes down around 1955. By this I mean that the revisionists in China continue to quote from the 1950s before Mao developed the struggle against revisionism through policies with the Soviet Union and the Cultural Revolution. In India as well, there has been division along these lines, where some continue to uphold the Liu Shaoqi line and oppose as “Lin Biaoism” the elevation of Maoism as the next and higher stage of Marxism-Leninism. This is all tied together in the battle against Chinese revisionism, so it’s important to reject the Chinese revisionists’ claims that the “Golden Age” was Mao’s leadership before the Great Leap (1958-1960). While these issues cause historical debate and organizational splitting in India, of course in some other countries the subject has a treatment closer to farce. We have one joker now calling himself a “great Maoist leader” who before jumping on the bandwagon and calling himself “Maoist” in 1993 claimed simultaneously to oppose Kim’s revisionism in Korea and that a civil war while criticizing the Lin Biaoists who in the 1960s were the ones to make official a basis for opposing Korean and Cuban revisionism. However, that is getting ahead of the story.

The reason there is “Maoism” today is a new problem not faced by Lenin. To be sure, Lenin had learned of cases where reactionaries defeat revolutions as in the Paris Commune or Hungary. Lenin even mentioned the creation of a “new bourgeoisie” in the government of socialism. The idea that imperialists could attack from Korea and that a civil war could go one way or another was not new to Lenin and hence anything along these lines probably cannot serve as a claim for the existence of Maoism as the third and superior stage of Marxism-Leninism. Khruschev changed all that.

In Khruschev’s restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, we have a case where there was no civil war apparent and no imperialist invasion. In fact, Stalin had held power in relative stability for about 30 years.

The response of the international communist movement divided into three groups: (1) denial and thus revilers of socialism; (2) impotence; (3) development.

Those in camp one are now finally on the defensive, because Gorbachev made it obvious that capitalist restoration is possible by the leaders of the party itself. It is only the totally brain-dead still hoping that “no.” Hoxha answered “yes,” Mao “no.”

So, we should not laugh, but Hoxha claimed there was an appropriate Stalin line without the benefit of hindsight that Mao had to handle this question. We are supposed to picture that the KGB should have handled Khruschev, not to mention Gorbachev. We should treat Khruschev as just another American-branded infiltrator according to non-Maoists who noticed something wrong with Khruschev.

For Maoists this is no where near adequate. How should we picture this? First the KGB sends teams of investigators to find out how much the US is behind Khruschev. Yet, here was Khruschev, the very leader of the Soviet Union who restored capitalism. The question arises whether the old approach to this question was adequate. Hoxha answered “yes,” Mao “no.”

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Notes on the term “Maoism”

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Khruschev sufficiently to stay on the Soviet side, while coming closer to understanding the problem. Even on bourgeois terms, narrow-minded and imperfect leaders of powerful countries do not hanker for a condo in Miami, especially not so much that they would give up the prestige of their own independence. Leaders of powerful countries should use their own privileges if they have a mind to being corrupt, so they would not need American bribes.

One could respond that Khruschev was the kind of joker who just revelled in widespread corruption without any particular rationale. Then the question becomes why he would have support. How did he get to be party leader? Certainly others had to know this and now we are talking about a more widespread problem. Furthermore, even if Americans bribed Khruschev to restore profit to communist countries, it would not explain why others actually carried out his economic plans.

Today when there is a general bourgeois ethos in Russia, if someone wants to say that the whole Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Putin governments were just like terms in the Soviet economy, NSA, and CIA budgets, we can imagine such a large operation. It is possible within Uncle Sam’s budget for “intelligence.” The problem comes in saying that is what happened under Stalin with people like Khruschev at his side ready to pounce on the enemy and keep the target in sight.

We try to place ourselves in the shoes of Chinese Marxists in the 1930s, we have some internal disagreement and uncertainty at MIM. One analysis holds that the May 4th revolution succeeded in introducing the concept of “-ism” China-wide. Another analysis holds that in their position, the Chinese comrades going into the remote countryside and speaking with uneducated peasants might say the “thoughts of Buddha” or the “thoughts of Mao” to use a form of expression that there could be no question people would understand. Rather than getting to the absolute bottom of the origin of “Mao Zedong Thought,” we thought it important to publish on our web page ways that to the point of epidemic level.

Closely related to this question is Mao’s statement in the 1930s that there is “no Marxism that is not concrete.” For Mao, there was no such thing as Marxism in the abstract. It either applied in conditions in China or did not exist at all in China. This had a lot to do with defeating Wang Ming and the Trotskyists who tried to say that their connection to historical figures in Moscow or training them made their theories correct. Likewise, ten years ago, we had some jokers in Australia trying to say that their connection to supposedly prestigious Peruvians in New York City made them vanguard leaders. Other similar types say that signing a joint resolution with multiple countries’ parties demonstrates that they care about concrete issues.

So Mao correctly fought a key battle against dogmatism; although by MIM standards, we would say such a battle was of life-and-death importance but still a lesser challenge than faced in the majority-exploiter countries where we have people calling exploiters “exploited.”

Mao Zedong Thought,
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Maoism

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international class struggle; it reflects the fundamental interests of the proletariat, of the working people. Mao Tse-tung’s thought has not grown spontaneously from among the working people; it is rather the result of Chairman Mao’s inheriting and developing with great talent the ideas of Marxism-Leninism on the basis of great revolutionary practice. It has summed up the new experiences of the international communist movement and elevated Marxism-Leninism to a completely new stage.” Similar remarks come from Lin in the little red book Quotations.

From that time onwards, genuine communists the world around treated Mao’s thought as containing universal truth as officially sanctioned by the Communist Party of China. Whether it was called “Mao Zedong Thought” or “Maoism” the important thing was whether people treated it as something universally true, and not just Marxism-Leninism applied to China. In this regard what Mao said about the Soviet Union was key.

Now we should say there is no “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism” that is not concrete. There is no “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism” that is not integrated with a country’s conditions. Deng Xiaoping and Kim Il Sung did not want that, because they wanted the 1950s status quo of “Marxism-Leninism,” which amounted to downplaying the struggle against capitalist restoration. Kim’s Juche tends in a rather subjectivist-empiricist direction by not upholding anything universal at all and thus it can be hard to tell apart from Deng’s line sometimes. If people use the term “Maoism” to mean Marxism-Leninism applied in Chinese conditions, then the term “Maoism” is as watered down as any other. So what is important is understanding the relationship between the universal and the particular and to give Maoism its proper universal accord.

At the 9th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, the only party in power mentioned by name as genuine Marxist-Leninist was the Albanian one. The congress openly condemned Brezhnev. This set Mao at odds with Castro, who seemingly to neglect his son (Nicholas Elia). But Jonathan’s otherwise idyllic family life, and his stress carries over to his work, and his romance culture with a Caldwell girl as well. Jonathan12 is a 24-year-old sex addict and has a gay experience. His father (Nicholas) is a raging homophobe, but his career and his stress carries over to his work, and his romance culture with a Caldwell girl as well. Jonathan’s otherwise idyllic family life, and his stress carries over to his work, and his romance culture with a Caldwell girl as well. Jonathan’s otherwise idyllic family life, and his stress carries over to his work, and his romance culture with a Caldwell girl as well.

The romance culture with a paranormal twist: White Noise

“White Noise”
Dir., Geoffrey Sax
Universal, 2005

Reviewed by a contributor
January 13, 2005

It is tempting to just write off “White Noise” as being yet more lubrication for the romance culture, as well as propaganda for religious thinking and paranormal research of questionable scientific value. The movie revolves around Jonathan Rivers’s (Michael Keaton) grief over his deceased wife (Chandra West), who died under mysterious circumstances. Jonathan persistently tries to keep contact with her by way of electronic voice phenomena (EVP) and succeeds in communicating with her ghost through what sound and look like intelligible signals present in TV static. Jonathan does this to the point of seeming to neglect his son (Nicholas Elia) emotionally. Jonathan’s behavior worries Nicholas; he wonders whether his father is going to be alright. After Anna’s death, things fall apart for Jonathan family-wise, and his stress carries over to his work, but Jonathan’s otherwise idyllic family life, intimate life and career are interrupted only by Anna’s death.

Whether EVP is bogus or not is not the point here. What is interesting about “White Noise” is that full-spectrum radiation isn’t the only thing that is white in this movie. “White Noise” goes out of its way to depict bourgeois Euro-Americans probably making at least six figures. Jonathan is an architect with some managerial responsibilities. Anna Rivers is an internationally renowned, financially successful writer. None of this is necessary for the plot to work except that Jonathan is able to buy several LCD or plasma TVs, an LCD monitor, and audio studio software, to use for EVP monitoring. Jonathan suspects that EVP enthusiast Raymond Price (Ian McNeice) or an obsessed fan of Anna’s may be stalking him, but Raymond is able to receive EVP messages from persons who aren’t famous and seems to be interested in all those with whom he communicates through EVP. So, even Anna’s being a famous writer is not needed for the plot to work, but “White Noise” still makes a point of depicting rich white people.

“White Noise” offers decadent parasites suggestions for new ways to spend their leisure time and provides them with many reasons to buy products. The MP3 player product placement is obvious in “Blade: Trinity” (2004), but in “White Noise,” the hi-tech product placement is bound up with Jonathan’s trying to deal with the death of a loved one. Why should Jonathan have all this EVP equipment, but not other people? Even if EVP were real, we could speak of inequality in the access to EVP.

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Kinsey is pro-science, if muddled

Kinsey, 2004
Bill Condon, director

Alfred Kinsey was a biologist who used the scientific methods he learned while studying insects to research sexual practices in mid-20th century America. Although this reviewer does not know enough to say that the survey methods and conclusions shown in this movie are accurate representations of the real-life Kinsey’s work, I recommend “Kinsey” for promoting a scientific approach to sexuality. That is, if I want to know how people behave sexually, it’s not good enough to listen to my preacher or extrapolate from my own experience or read the fiction in Cosmo or Playboy; I have to do more research, probably by asking people about their sex lives like Kinsey did.

“Kinsey” is to be commended for making this basic point—taking a scientific approach to sexuality in society—in an entertaining manner. It’s not a textbook on survey sampling, but then no movie should strive to be a textbook. Instead, movies should challenge the audience to question long-held incorrect or outright reactionary ideas. They should also promote a basic worldview or ideology. Of course MIM would prefer movies that promote proletarian ideology, but until we have our own films playing on more than 100 screens for over seven weeks we’ll settle for “Kinsey” putting science ahead of clerical cant and old wives’ tales.

On a substantive level, MIM agrees with several points raised in “Kinsey.” For example, Kinsey begins a sex-ed lecture for college students saying that in a relationship—students, putting science ahead of clerical cant and old wives’ tales—there are hints throughout the movie that Kinsey hasn’t grasped this point, for example when his assistants have a jealous row over a consensual affair. But the movie doesn’t take a clear position; at times it seems to make the link between romantic love and sex. This may have been a conscious decision on the part of the filmmakers: in his time and place Kinsey may have been the best thing going; the principal enemy may have been the religious bigots and charlatans as opposed to the modern pornography industry that oppresses women under the banner of “liberating” sex. MacKinnon and MIM weren’t around yet. Still, the movie was made for today’s audience, and while its pro-science anti-churchy mumbo jumbo line is sadly still obvious in “Blade: Trinity” (2004), but in “White Noise,” the hi-tech product placement is bound up with Jonathan’s trying to deal with the death of a loved one. Why should Jonathan have all this EVP equipment, but not other people? Even if EVP were real, we could speak of inequality in the access to EVP.

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**Mental illness and millionaires’ parasitism in *Aviator***

“The Aviator”
Dir., Martin Scorsese
Miramax Films, 2004

Reviewed by a contributor January 2, 2006
[The Aviator has been nominated for 11 Academy Awards, including best picture, best director, and two acting awards. —ed.]

“The Aviator” focuses, in part, on what psychiatry would consider mental illness symptoms: Euro-American imperialist Howard Hughes’s obsessive-compulsive behavior and paranoia. Today, at least a few million Americans are supposed to have obsessive-compulsive disorder. OCD patients’ obsessions are often specific to a certain kind of object, or a certain kind of thought. The manifestation of OCD seems to vary with circumstances.

Mental illness diagnoses in general are often a response to behavior that either conflicts with, or concentrates, ideas and practices prevailing under the imperialist-patriarchy. What psychologists call “Pure-Q” involving obsessive thinking only, is particularly interesting from the point of view of this approach. Some of what is called obsessive thinking could be viewed as excessive use of formal logic, and idealism. MIM has used a similar approach with other so-called mental illnesses. “In MIM’s experience, it has been useful to address eating disorders as an incorrect line on gender.”(1)

MIM has dealt with a related theme in the context of the Chinese communists’ practice of including politically-oriented group activities as a part of rehabiliation. “The manifestations of schizophrenia are social even if there is a chemical component or basis. The gross individualism and violence in America may lead people diagnosed as or diagnosed with any category of paranoia, while in a socialist society their behavior would manifest itself differently. Even before socialism, a revolutionary party can divert this energy to meaningful political work. The key is good politics.”(1) In the same issue of MIM Theory, MIM discusses how revolutionary activity can effectively mitigate other mental illness symptoms, particularly depression symptoms. However, “good politics” is not just a rehabilitation technique. Rather, individuals must defeat their own mental illnesses so that they can even better pursue a revolution. For example, “We operate on the conviction that everyone [including the psychiatrically defined “retarded”], without exception, is capable of being incorporated into the revolutionary struggle.”(1) This is the case even if mental illnesses represent a deterioration of urban parasitism and mental abilities and require their children to take leadership in different ways.

Obsessive-compulsive symptoms are central to the personality of Howard Hughes in “The Aviator.” Most movie viewers will not go out and buy a Howard Hughes biography book after seeing “The Aviator,” instead interpreting the movie as an example of a great American innovator and visionary, and taking the part-fiction biographical movie for what it is and leaving it at that, so I am not going to get into whether “The Aviator” accurately portrays Hughes. The movie ends with Hughes in the late 1940s, which leaves out some of the most controversial and ambitious parts of Hughes’s life in the first place. Exactly what kind of murderous, CIA-serving U.S. imperialist Hughes was not that important. Suffice it to say that the pretense of a movie’s being somehow inspired by reality is almost always a smokescreen for the movie’s politics. Especially when the person in question has so little bearing on political practice, those reviewers who emphasize accuracy of portrayal are focused on artistic criteria, an approach to art criticism which smuggly reactionary ideology into listeners’ reception of works. The Hughes character (Leonardo DiCaprio) is frequently distressed with what he perceives to be uncleanness, and what he perceives to be imperfection of a technical sort, for example, his complaint about the protruding rivets on the fuselage of an airplane. The obvious comparison is with “A Beautiful Mind” (2001) despite the main characters’ different types of mental illness. The idea is that mental illness can coincide with, or even produce, genius, but may also be its downfall. Despite the notion of the mad scientist, the idea of the mentally eccentric intellectual is typically reserved for artistic bohemians, so it is interesting to see these movies featuring the mental illnesses of Hughes and John Nash, who are more “scientific.” Unfortunately, “The Aviator” does not ponder how every urban imperialist-country parasite, female or male, entertainer or scientist, is prone to “mental illness.” Doing so might undermine the whole individualist approach to “mental illness” and expose social problems.

Instead, in “The Aviator,” “mental illness” has the context of celebrity and success, as if the movie were trying to say: see, even the ruling class needs psychology and therapy, so you should want it, too. Like many other movies that depict seemingly mentally ill persons, “The Aviator” does nothing to disturb movie viewers’ assumption of the need for psychology and therapy when there is a mentally ill character on-screen. To top it off, “The Aviator” tries to be stereotypically Freudian with all of “The Aviator’s” breast, milk and death wish references. So, Hughes’s need for psychology seems to be just a matter of fact. This is particularly damaging in the context of professional psychology’s rapid growth after World War II, which “The Aviator” completely ignores even though it focuses on mental illness.

At the same time that it expresses sympathy for “mentally ill” Hughes, “The Aviator” completely ignores even though it focuses on mental illness. The Hughes character (Leonardo DiCaprio) is frequently distressed with what he perceives to be uncleanness, and what he perceives to be imperfection of a technical sort, for example, his complaint about the protruding rivets on the fuselage of an airplane. The obvious comparison is with “A Beautiful Mind” (2001) despite the main characters’ different types of mental illness. The idea is that mental illness can coincide with, or even produce, genius, but may also be its downfall. Despite the notion of the mad scientist, the idea of the mentally eccentric intellectual is typically reserved for artistic bohemians, so it is interesting to see these movies featuring the mental illnesses of Hughes and John Nash, who are more “scientific.” Unfortunately, “The Aviator” does not ponder how every urban imperialist-country parasite, female or male, entertainer or scientist, is prone to “mental illness.” Doing so might undermine the whole individualist approach to “mental illness” and expose social problems.

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**The romance culture with a paranormal twist: White Noise**

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equipment. Like many other movies featuring obviously wealthy Euro-American characters, “White Noise” takes their wealth, and the class structure for granted and then proceeds to focus on their adventures with the romance culture. This reflects the reality of imperialist-country parasites’ lives. Their lives are so empty that they have to look to the romance culture for ways to create meaning in their lives. Yet, this same culture benefits only gender oppressors, including the majority of adults in the Euro-American nation.

“White Noise” also adds to people’s reasons to engage in serial killing: ghosts that want to do it. “White Noise” is similar to “Murder by Numbers” (2002), for example, in presenting new justifications for serial killing, but in “White Noise,” there is simply no way to avoid the kind of serial killing depicted unless viewers think that it would be safer for wimmin to not drive alone at night. In “White Noise,” Jonathan not to “meddle” with ghosts, which makes it more difficult to see these movies featuring the mental illnesses of Hughes and John Nash, who are more “scientific.” Unfortunately, “The Aviator” does not ponder how every urban imperialist-country parasite, female or male, entertainer or scientist, is prone to “mental illness.” Doing so might undermine the whole individualist approach to “mental illness” and expose social problems.

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**Blade needs more clarity on who make up the masses**

“Blade: Trinity”  
Dir., David S. Goyer  
New Line, 2004

Reviewed by a contributor  
January 5, 2005

“Blade: Trinity” is the third movie in the “Blade” series, based on Marvel comic books. In “Blade: Trinity,” we find out that vampire hunter Abraham Whistler (Kris Kristofferson) has been working with other humyn vampire hunters in the united States for an unknown amount of time. These other vampire hunters are organized into ideologically dispersed groups: “sleepers” cells. One of the Nightstalkers, Hannibal King (Ryan Reynolds), is a former vampire. Hannibal’s group rescues Blade (Wesley Snipes) after vampires capture Blade with the help of Familiars, who are capo-like, humyn lackeys of the vampires. Police chief and Familiar Marvin Vreeze reveals that the vampires have been operating a blood farming facility in each major city in the united States. The vampires keep comatose humyns in tightly sealed bags and suspend their bodies vertically in midair, they ‘drip’ blood. The vampires target homeless humyns of seemingly diverse nationalities.

In their review of “Blade” (1998), MC5 states that the militarily tactically superior vampire hunters have isolated themselves from the masses. (1) In fact, in “Blade: Trinity,” the tactically superior vampire hunters still have isolated themselves from the masses; there are just more of them. Now, there are vampire hunters called “Nightstalkers,” the most prominent of whom are Euro-American in “Blade: Trinity.” Blade is depicted as needing the Nightstalkers, but not as needing the masses.

Blade reluctantly works with the Nightstalkers and is still reluctant to do so even near the end of the movie, treating the Nightstalkers as annoyances and unnecessary baggage. “Blade: Hughes’s success! And dicky Hughes as having limitations, but does not do enough to oppose the notion of the lonely revolutionary hero. At the end of the day, the trinity of Blade, and two Nightstalkers, Hannibal and Abigail Whistler (Jessica Biel), are three superheroes, and we are no longer living in a post-modern world. The ‘Blade’ movies’ orientation toward the masses. Interestingly, a blind scientist (Natacha Lyonne) is a member of the Nightstalkers, which suggests that disabled persons are able to participate in real-world struggle, but the movie doesn’t show any lumpen-proletarian as being part of the Nightstalkers. Yet, the vampires target lumpen-proletarians for their blood farms disproportionately and mainly.

There is a difference between the masses, and the population or even the majority of the population. (2) In the real world, the majority of Euro-Americans are not among the masses. With the “Blade” movies, the depiction is to say that the majority of Euro-Americans are among the masses since the vampires oppress them, too. But this depends on whether they really are in not only a stuper, but a self-defeating stuper. Certainly, in the “Blade” world, it seems that’s what communism does to the masses; there is no longer any reason for him to do so, lose control through “mental illness,” but “needs.”

Interestingly, “The Aviator” attributes compulsive behavior has a social basis: Hughes creates more order elsewhere, something which implies that Hughes’ obsessive-compulsive disorders are ontogenetic and social. For example, Hughes to the list of “famous OCD sufferers” or whatever, who, of course, is doing the whole humyn population a disservice. For others not sleeping rough on the streets, it is more a matter of seeing stories about strange disappearances and serial killings on the news, on their TV sets, and dealing with feelings of unease.

To the extent that the movie actually has a concept of the masses, “Blade: Trinity” is confused about whom the masses in the “Blade” world consist of. “Blade: Trinity” depicts the Familiars as being profitably using homeless persyns as lightning rods for the vampires’ thirst for blood. For example, the technician at the warehouse blood farm is a humyn who hesitates to shut down the blood production units after intimidating Blade instructs him to. This accurately reflects the orientation of real-world bourgeois and teleological humans against Hughes. Despite, Blade kills humyn police officers, those who aren’t Familiars, for his own profit. The lack of understanding by the movie makers that the majority of Euro-Americans aren’t among the masses in the real world. A lot of “Blade: Trinity” is

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**Aviator**

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Aviator” makes use of Hughes’s fame in another way. “The Aviator” contains a lot of bullshit about a visionary Euro-American entrepreneur and innovator’s being victimized by corporate monopoly and government corruption. For example, “The Aviator” portrays Hughes as being unfairly targeted by the Senate War Investigating Committee. Less sinisterly, Noah Dietrich (John C. Reilly) repeatedly reminisce about the life and times of a real-life Amerikkkan hero. At the end of the day, some kind of congruency, evenness, or symmetry, in their own environments and possessions. Most people with such concerns do not care about oppression and are not disturbed with being parasites themselves. The recent review of “The Machinist” (2004) points out that there is a multifaceted contradiction between the powerlessness of parasitic privileges, on the one hand, and powerlessness to change the system at the lifestyle level. The specific kinds of things that OCD patients obsess about are often specific to certain societies.

Interestingly, “The Aviator” attributes Hughes’ obsession with cleanliness to his mother’s warnings about disease epidemics and her fear about “colorless” under quarantine in the neighborhood, which implies that Hughes’ obsessive-compulsive behavior has a social basis: other persyns’ poverty, and some kind of socio-spatial stratification. That Hughes continues to distance himself from non-manipulated things that are somehow feels the need to create an illusion of control precisely where power to oppose the notion of the lonely revolutionary hero. At the end of the day, the trinity of Blade, and two Nightstalkers, Hannibal and Abigail Whistler (Jessica Biel), are three superheroes, and we are no longer living in a post-modern world. The ‘Blade’ movies’ orientation toward the masses; there is no longer any reason for him to do so, lose control through “mental illness,” but “needs.”

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Lifer's views on death

Being the recipient of a three strikes life sentence, a penalty just below death, I see capital punishment as yet another example of what’s wrong with our justice system.

The debate has now shifted to whether Scott Peterson should die for his crimes. On its face, killing your pregnant wife is about as bad as it gets.

But ours is a flawed system. In a capital crime, at best, if such can be said, a guilty killer voluntarily confesses, waives an inmate’s constitutional right to remain silent, and is tricked, tricked or tortured, removing any doubt about guilt. At worst, an innocent person is executed.

The phenomenon of actual innocence – a problem plaguing the American criminal justice system, and especially the death penalty – is generally caused by overzealous prosecutors and police, jailhouse informants who should never be trusted, and overly suggestive identification procedures conducted by bias law enforcement.

Since 1976, 111 people have been found factually innocent and liberated from the gallows after being found guilty – just like Scott Peterson. Those are the cases we know of.

I have a personal stake in this debate. As a pro se litigant who’s been fighting his three strikes life sentence for over a half a decade, I have more than a passing interest in capital crimes. One of San Quentin’s most notorious death row prisoners, Richard Allen Davis, committed the 1993 murder of Polk Knight that brought three strikes into being.

The unmistakable guilt of Davis made it possible for myself and thousands of others to receive life sentences for nonviolent crimes. Would I like to see him die? Sure I would. But as a zealous lawyer to say the angry mob is in the forefront of the courtroom on the day the jury convined Peterson was representative of civilized society.

Justice is not only flawed, but automatic. The cost of capital punishment is affordable in this society; it doesn’t add up.

Under Lock & Key
News from Prisons & Prisoners

Spreading AIDS in prison?

We in Texas [are no longer] allowed to have sexually explicit material to get us through these months of incarceration. The significance of this policy will be telling.

Prisons are already infected with weaknesses of the flesh in the form of homosexuality. Now with self-gratifying material being allowed, the spread of homosexuality will rise horrifyingly, which also means HIV and AIDS will be very much in evidence. It’s bad comrades and getting viral. What can be done to stop this criminal genocide?

I am absolutely convinced there is complicity between the corrections institution and the medical branches. I have first hand knowledge that HIV infections are being transmitted among the prison population by way of unprotected sexual intercourse.

Known homosexual HIV carriers are being housed with non-infected prisoners and soliders and guards are having unprotected sex with non-infected prisoners. The majority of non-infected prisoners that are vulnerable are short-timers. Many of these short-term prisoners are bi-sexual, which means that once these American systems is far to flawed to be able to provide medical treatment. What can be done to stop this criminal genocide?

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Still, the case against Peterson is entirely circumstantial. Even the bible says you need two eyewitnesses in order to justify execution. If the justice system could guarantee a 99 percent rate of absolute certainty – a standard of excellence, in my opinion, impossible to achieve – that still means six or seven death row inmates in San Quentin are innocent.

Moreover, it costs roughly $2 million to try a capital case in California, six times higher than a non-capital trial. Do the math; it simply doesn’t add up.

It’s time for this country to abandon it’s infatuation with death. The proper punishment for murder is life, not lethal injection.

If Peterson truly killed Laci and Conner, then does he deserve to die? Not if the innocent are also executed under this same flawed system of justice. If you hate Peterson so much, let him rot in prison for the rest of his life.

Take from someone who knows, life is worth than death. Abolish the death penalty, it’s an abomination.

—a California prisoner, December 2004

MIM responds: We stand with this prisoner in opposition to the imperialist death penalty. The American system is far to flawed to be able to provide medical treatment. What can be done to stop this criminal genocide?

MIM on Prisons & Prisoners

MIM seeks to build public opinion against America’s criminal injustice system, and to eventually replace the bourgeois injustice system with proletarian justice. The bourgeois injustice system imprisons and executes a disproportionately large and growing number of oppressed people while letting the biggest mass murderers — the imperialists and their lackeys — roam free. Imperialism is not opposed to murder or theft; it only insists that these crimes be committed in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

“All U.S. citizens are criminals — accomplices and accessories to the crimes of U.S. oppression globally until the day U.S. imperialism is overcome. All U.S. citizens should start from the point of view that they are reforming criminals.”

MIM does not advocate that all prisoners go free today; we have a more effective program for fighting crime as was demonstrated in China prior to the restoration of capitalism there in 1976. We say that all prisoners are political prisoners because under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, all imprisonment is substantively political. It is our responsibility to exert revolutionary leadership and conduct political agitation and organization among prisoners whose material conditions make them an overwhelmingly revolutionary group. Some prisoners should and will work on self-criticism under a future dictatorship of the proletariat in those cases in which prisoners really did do something wrong by proletarian standards.

Officer tries to stop education program

At Ironwood State Prison they have an experimental college program where they pay for your books and tuition. But there are some standards you have to meet to be eligible, which are not bad. There is limited space for free books and tuition. So you are able to pursue your degree on your own, all you have to pay for is your books and they’ll pay for your tuition.

Well there is a Corrections Officer (CO) who does not agree with the program. So he writes to the local newspapers saying it’s not fair that convicts get a free education and he has to pay. He says rapists and murderers don’t deserve a college education. So every time an inmate graduates he will lead a protest and picket outside of the community college and prison. This C.O. has been caught throwing away inmates’ outgoing mail, searching inmates’ cells and throwing all their belongings all over the place. He gets disciplined by his superior but nothing happens.

They are also making us limit our property

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to a certain amount. They are including state issued clothes and sleeping materials such as blankets and sheets. It may not sound like much but it is to an inmate who has to have cosmetics, clothes, food, and for those of us who are currently appealing our conviction.

- a California prisoner, January 2005

MIM adds: Most prisons have cut educational programs to virtually nothing leaving those incarcerated like MIM as the only providers of educational materials and classes for prisoners. Prisons don’t even pretend to be attempting rehabilitation, instead putting their time and energy into censoring literature and mail, and trying to shut down the few education programs that still exist. MIM needs support in the form of books and funds to help expand our Books for Prisoners program, and legal help to fight the constant censorship.

**Prisoner legal union**

I am founder of a grassroots legal Union for prisoners by prisoners (Legal Eagles). University law library attends recognize the need for prisoners to have meaningful access to forms and courts. Thousands of inmates simply cannot gain access to limited law library space.

*We seek mobility in the prison and to offer speakers on prison policy to new inmates on how to do 602, and how to get indigent services and legal forms without hassle. We want to offer law books for borrow so inmates can study overnight in their cells, not just 2 hours a month in the law library. Possibly in the future we want to obtain our own copy machine to avoid censorship.*

We are in California Medical Facility (CMF) and 50% of us are HIV/AIDS prisoners. I am one trying to make change for good before I leave my mark. Being HIV positive, I have what equates to a death sentence.

*New rules here mean that inmates cannot get books unless they pay for them themselves. Otherwise it will count as a quarterly package? It's come down to getting a law book to help and do without or get food and hygiene products and stay in prison without recourse. I am now at starting a prison legal union so any start up info or suggestions are welcome. So far prison officials are not receptive to our ideas.*

We start seek up grants and accounts to pay 10 cents an hour to Legal Eagles to help inmates. Unfortunately inmates don't do anything if there isn't anything in it for them.

*The prison pays 8 cents an hour to most of its inmate employees.*

- a California prisoner at CMF, December 2000

MIM responds: We welcome prisoners taking up legal work on behalf of others. Most prisoners do not have the finances to afford legal counsel, so they become jailhouse lawyers, teaching themselves what is necessary to fight their own legal battles. MIM set up a Prisoners Legal Clinic (PLC) several years ago, at the urging of some of our comrades behind bars. Prisoners working with the PLC put together legal briefs and guides for others. Some of these are printed in MIM Notes, others are distributed to prisoners as needed. We look forward to working with the Legal Eagles to expand our legal work behind bars.

**La County beating prisoners**

It has been a while since I was able to write you, I was transferred to LA County jail to go to court. I wasn’t able to take any of my property with me, and I don’t know your address by heart, but now I’m back.

I went to court only to get ten years added, they didn’t take any time off, so now I have 75 years to live. The pigs in LA County are beating prisoners some place in that county all over every day. It’s a war zone down there, they put the cuffs on you and take you some place and beat you. All of them, even the captain will beat you. They put gangs in units with other gangs that these young guys call their enemy, and if they jump you the pigs will put you right back in there. The prisoners don’t know that the real enemy is the pigs. I have old gang stuff all over my body so when they see that they get up. Someone got stabbed and the pigs put it on me, I even been jumped by the pigs a few times.

- a California prisoner, December 2004

**Fighting gang validation in Cali.**

As far as my gang validations are concerned, well I have yet to hear back from anyone. It’s been four months since the process began. I should’ve heard something by now. What I believe they’re trying to do is leaving me hanging over my head so that when I go in front of the committee they can hold me back. If anyone finds their self in this situation, what they can do is what I’m doing myself. They can request an “Olsen Review” which we are entitled to twice a year. Once your request has been granted, ask your counselor to show you your 128 B2 form. This should say if you’re validated or not. If you’re not, it will show you all the pieces of evidence they used against you. You are entitled to a copy of this form.

The importance of this for those of us who have received an indeterminate SHU for “program failure” and are being considered for “gang validation” as well is to not let these pigs hold you back any longer than you have to. Once you know you’ve validated you can start fighting your case. And not have to wait until your indeterminate SHU for program failure is up.

- a California prisoner, January 2005

MIM adds: the California prison system is notorious for labeling political activist prisoners as gang members. This gang validation can be achieved using secret evidence, informants who are given every incentive to make up information, tattoos, and information about who a prisoner speaks to in the library or yard. It is very difficult to challenge a gang validation, which can result in an indeterminate sentence to California’s prison control units (the SHU).

**Are We Safe**

by a New York Prisoner, August 2004

None of us are ever safe:

*As long as we abandon truth’s way, To hide behind falsehoods deceptive shadow.*

*As long as we extinguish the light of reason, To grope in darkness with fear’s irrational face.*

*As long as we choose to stand before the altar of our appetites.*

*Rather than sit at the table of our need.*

*As long as we elect madness and thieves to govern Our lives, with a smile and promises of better days to come; Never will we be led by the upright, prudent and strong.*

*As long as we reject the evidence of our eyes and ears,*

*Because we fear to know and understand that obligation and sacrifice reveal to us — We will always be led astray.*

*As long as we continue to barter our dreams for The whines of excuses, pawn our hopes for fashions Trendy ideals-our faith will always fail us. As long as we would rather blindly believe in the pigs who say it must be so.*

*Than intelligently think for once in our lives— Our masters will be cruel and many, and Being safe will be our greatest self-deception.*

**MIM: This piece speaks strongly in these days years of the War on Terrorism. On September 11th, 2001 MIM came out with a special issue of MIM Notes with the statement entitled “We mourn those who died in attacks on the World Trade Center. We strengthen our resolve to cast off war-hungry capitalism!” Since then, we’ve continued to expose American war-mongering as the world’s greatest danger, not the answer to terrorism that it claims to be.**

**Facts on US imprisonment**

The facts about imprisonment in the United States are that the United States has been the world’s leading prison-state per capita for the last 25 years, with a brief exception during Boris Yeltsin’s declaration of a state of emergency.

That means that while Reagan was talking about a Soviet “evil empire” he was the head of a state that imprisoned more people per capita.

In supposedly “hard-line” Bulgaria of the Soviet bloc of the 1980s, the imprisonment rate was less than half that of the United States.

To find a comparison with U.S. imprisonment of Black people, there is no statistic in any country that compares including apartheid South Africa of the era before Mandela was president. The last situation remotely comparable to the situation today was under Stalin during war time. The majority of prisoners are non-violent offenders and the U.S. Government now holds about a half million more prisoners than China; even though China is four times our population.

The rednecks tell MIM that we live in a “free country.” They live in an Orwellian 1984 situation where freedom is imprisoned.

Notes:
4. Figure of 52.1 percent for state prisoners there for non-violent offenses. Abstract of the United States 1993, p. 211.

Join the fight against the injustice system

While we fight to end the criminal injustice system MIM engages in reformist battles to improve the lives of prisoners. Below are some of the campaigns we are currently waging, and ways people behind the bars and on the outside can get involved. More info can be found on our prison web site: http://www.etext.org/Politics/ MIM/agitation/prisons

Stop Censorship in Prison: Prisoners frequently censor books, newspapers and magazines coming from MIM’s books for prisoners program. We need help from lawyers, paralegals and jailhouse lawyers to fight this censorship.

Books for Prisoners: This program focuses on political education of prisoners. Send donations of books and money for our Books for Prisoners program.

End the Three Strikes laws: This campaign is actively fighting the repressive California laws, but similar laws exist in other states. Write to us to request a petition to collect signatures. Send us articles, books and information on three strike laws.

Shut Down the Control Units: Across the country there are a growing number of prison control units. These are permanently designated prisons or cells in prisons that lock prisoners up in solitary or small group confinement for 22 or more hours a day with no congregation dining, exercise or other services, and virtually no programs for prisoners. Prisoners are placed in control units for extended periods of time. These units cause both mental and physical harm.

Write to us to request a petition to collect signatures. Get your organization to sign the statement demanding control units be shut down. Send us information about where there are control units in your state. Include the names of the prisons as well as the number of control unit beds/cells in each prison if that is known. Send us anti-control unit artwork.

MIM’s Re-Lease on Life Program: This program provides support for our comrades who have been recently released from the prison system, to help them meet their basic needs and also continue with their revolutionary organizing on the outside. We need funds, housing, and job resources. We also need prisoner’s input on the following survey questions:

1. What are the biggest challenges you face being released from prison?
2. How can these problems be addressed?
3. What are the important elements of a successful release program?
Blade needs more clarity on who make up the masses

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fantasy, but the movie can’t be considered in isolation from the real world.

In a less supernatural version of “Blade: Trinity,” Blade is a socialist people’s republic, vampires, Familiars and blood “donors” would be the same species: humyn. Instead of being non-humyn nationalities, the vampires are fascists with cybernetic implants (they had to invent their superiority). They are comprised of capitalists and bourgeoisie, workers, and attack lumpen-proletarians and undocumented workers. Blade doesn’t need any serum in the literal sense; what the original “Blade: Trinity” calls “serum,” the new version of the movie calls doses of “correct ideas.” Abraham’s rhetoric in that film brings the original “Blade: Trinity” would reflect the reality that the majority of the U.S. population is neither exploited, nor being oppressed by a nation inside or outside U.S. borders.

One of the better redeeming elements of “Blade: Trinity,” in the way that it is, is that the movie goes out of its way to ponder Blade’s future, and this future seems to lie near the revolutionary struggle. The Nightstalkers themselves don’t think Blade is the kind of person who will go back to their desk or office job and be a weak person anymore. In the war with the vampires is over. Blade defeated the Reapers in “Blade II” (2002). Movie watchers know Blade will probably defeat the vampires at the end of “Blade: Trinity.” So, what conflicts will Blade focus on next, with the vampire nation’s oppression overcome? Blade himself tells Sommerfield’s daughter, Zoe (Haili Page), that the world isn’t “nice.” (Although, this is in response to a question about why Blade needs to take his serum, which suppresses his thirst for blood.) At the beginning of the movie, a Familiar tries to turn Blade into his pet, setting him up for pig repression. Abraham encourages Blade to be more careful. Blade replies that he didn’t know this was a “popularity contest.”

The point about revolution not being a popularity contest is interesting from the viewpoint of MIM’s anti-Menshevik line. Unfortunately, Blade’s comment has the context of endless violence, which is extremely repetitive in “Blade: Trinity” to the point of monotony. True, the vampires are killing people. But in the real world, so is imperialism, and at this point, MIM advocates only protracted legal struggle in the United States with the exception of some First Nations’ struggles. Blade could get a camera and film vampires (even if invisible to the camera) preying on humyns, and distribute that undeniably bizarre and shocking video in order to change public opinion, but he doesn’t. The real world is not as simple as the “Blade” world—for one, more is involved in creating popular opinion than simply showing photos of imperialism’s dead and dying victims—but the “Blade” world is that simple, and Blade’s actions still do not make sense.

To its credit, “Blade: Trinity” seems to recognize that its own violent imagery and content are unnecessary. Hannibal remarks that Blade might want to get therapy after Blade, without blinking, lets a Familiar fall from a building rooftop onto the street. However, not only does Hannibal pay too much attention to a particular instance of Blade’s violent strategy, rather than Blade’s strategy itself, he confuses a political mistake with his illness and supports the therapeutic culture.

“Blade: Trinity” is purposefully over the top in its violence, even for a movie based on comics, and jokes fun at itself. There is a lot of phallic imagery—for example, Blade’s standing erect, the camera focusing on his crotch, after he takes his serum at the police station—and there is the whole deliberately Freudian vagina dentata thing between Hannibal and the vampire woman Danica Talos (Parker Posey). Another Nightstalker scientist (Patton Oswalt) calls Abigail a “hottie,” “Blade” being the movie commenting on its own sex appeal.

Some reviewers will say that the violence in “Blade: Trinity” is gratuitous or exists for its own titilation, especially when a strong, but expectedly sexy, “hottie” metes out much of the violence. (For example, the weapon-wielding Abigail in the movie. The interesting question is, what are the ideological effects of the gratuitous action violence.)

On the one hand, the violence is related to the theme that full vampires are automatically deserving of lethal violence, while half-vampires and former vampires are not. What Hannibal has to be at least partly humyn to be part of the Nightstalkers. “Blade: Trinity” has almost no concept of class or nation traitor. When the war is with the vampires, it is impossible to work with any full-vampire—full in a literally genetic sense.

At one point, Blade, in a moment of bravado, tells Drake (Dominic Purcell) that he was “born ready” to die, which may be a reference to Blade’s desire for revenge against the vampires who hit and killed Blade’s mother, and caused Blade to become a vampire. Blade has no one in the Nightstalkers who he can talk to. What would otherwise be just a metaphysical idea about how one hybrid had always had an inclination to be revolutionary is put in the service of an exaggerated bloodline theory. (3) The idea in “Blade: Trinity” is that being humyn, without any qualification other than non-Familiar, is the best; being a vampire is just plain evil. The sentiment is that humyn-vampire hybrids are inherently evil enemies. For that reason, Blade is killed by a Familiar after Blade’s serum at the police station—and there is the whole deliberately Freudian vagina dentata thing between Hannibal and the vampire woman Danica Talos (Parker Posey). Another Nightstalker scientist (Patton Oswalt) calls Abigail a “hottie,” “Blade” being the movie commenting on its own sex appeal.

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Finally, not only does “Blade: Trinity” conflate class origin and class position, it does so in a way that supports genocide as an option for progressives. The idea that the vampire thirst for blood can be turned on and off with some kind of switch has no correspondence with any kind of oppression in the real world. For the sake of having an alternative, we can refer to the “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” character Angel, who is friendly to that show’s vampire hunters, but still drinks blood of some kind.

Notes:
2. MC5, “Again on the subject of the ‘masses’ in the imperialist countries” (April 19, 2001); http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/wim/cong/ommasses01.html

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